

**Washington State Department Of Transportation  
Washington State Ferries  
2006 Tariff Proposal  
Filing of CR-102 Form**

Briefing Paper  
Prepared for the January 2006  
Transportation Commission Meeting

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**PURPOSE:**

To provide a summary of the Department's and Tariff Policy Committee's proposal for a 2006 tariff change.

**ACTION/OUTCOME:**

The Commission will be asked to accept or modify the Tariff Policy Committee's proposal for purposes of taking it to the public for review and comment in February. Staff will also ask the Commission's permission to go ahead and file the CR – 102 Form with the Code Reviser's office.

Filing the CR-102 form with the Code Reviser is the second step in the formal process for notifying the public of the proposed changes to WAC sections 468-300-010, 020, 040 and 220 that contain the schedule of fares for Washington State Ferries (the first step, filing the CR 101 form, was accomplished in December). During the next several weeks, Washington State Ferries will be seeking comments from ferry users throughout the ferry served communities on the proposal. The Commission will then hold a hearing in late March to review comments and hear additional testimony before adopting a final tariff through the filing of the CR-103 form with the Code Reviser no later than March 30, 2006.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Tariff Policy Committee has provided in-depth analysis and recommendation to the Transportation Commission of tariff changes since 1991. The last tariff modification cycle was initiated in December 2004; this resulted in a 6% tariff increase in June of 2005. The Tariff Policy Committee has developed recommendations for the next year for implementation on May 1, 2006.

**DISCUSSION:**

The proposal contains the following elements:

- A general fare increase of 6% plus nickel rounding and continues the phase-in of Tariff Route Equity (distance based fares).

- Change the standard vehicle-to-motorcycle fare ratio from 5:1 to 4:1 (calculated on the vehicle portion of the fare only).
- Implement a new discount program for in-need organizations that maintains the discounts these organizations currently realize by purchasing and severing frequent user coupon books.
- Implement an up-front, non-refundable, commercial account maintenance fee of \$50 per fiscal year.
- Limit monthly passes to 31 round trips per month, with additional wording in the WAC that they are non-transferable, non-reproducible, and intended for a single user.
- Extend the overheight surcharge waiver for vehicles between 20 and 30 feet in length with a wheelchair lift that raises the total height of the vehicle above 7'6".
- Adjust WAC language to match WSF operational terminology under the Electronic Fare System (EFS).
- Delay the surcharge for multi-ride products purchased at tollbooths until the first fare change opportunity no sooner than six months after the successful completion of EFS implementation systemwide.

On the advice of the legislative members of the Tariff Policy Committee, the recommendation does not contain an additional fuel surcharge to address the increased price of diesel. Instead, it was felt that the legislature should have an opportunity to address the impact of increased fuel costs on State agencies in a statewide context.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Commission should adopt the Tariff Policy Committee's recommendation and allow the legislature to explore other financial options with regard to the fuel funding issue.

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